

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-37 are pending in this application. Claim 37 is added by the present response. No new matter is believed to be added.<sup>1</sup> Claims 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 19, 21, 25, 26, and 28-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. patent 5,812,747 to Kayano et al. (herein “Kayano”). Claims 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13-18, 20, 22-24, 27, and 31-36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over U.S. patent 5,802,260 to Shimakawa et al. (herein “Shimakawa”).<sup>2</sup>

Addressing the above-noted rejections, those rejections are traversed by the present response.

Applicants respectfully submit the claims positively recite features neither taught nor suggested by the applied art.

First, independent claim 1 recites “a source apparatus specification unit that specifies a source printing apparatus, which entrusts at least one print job stored in its own buffer to another printing apparatus, *in a preset range of printing apparatuses*” (emphasis added); the other independent claims recite similar features. Kayano does not disclose or suggest such a feature.

Kayano discloses for example in Figure 4 a copying system in which a copying machine 1, after reading an original, sends image data to copying machines 2 and 3, and each of the copying machines 1, 2, and 3 can start copying for an allotted quantity, when an interconnected mode is selected. In Kayano if a jam occurs during the allotted copying operation in copying machine 3, the copying machine 3 sends copying machine 1 information about the jamming, and then the copying machine 1 can request the copying machine 2 to send status

<sup>1</sup> For support of new claim 37 see for example the present specification at page 22, lines 1-7; page 27, lines 17-21; page 28, lines 16-25; and Figure 6.

<sup>2</sup> The statement for the above rejection in paragraph 16 of the Office Action only references Shimakawa, but the following paragraphs explaining the rejection also reference Kayano. It appears the rejection is based on a combination of Kayano in view of Shimakawa. Clarification is requested.

information and if the copying machine 2 is available for recovery copying, copying machine 1 can request copying machine 2 to conduct recovery copying in addition to its initially allocated quantity.

In contrast to Kayano, the claimed system detects an alternative printing apparatus in a preset range of printing apparatuses, and transfers a print job to the buffer of the alternative printing apparatus. In contrast to the claimed invention, Kayano sends image data read by copying machine 1, when an operator presses a connection mode selection button 5 of copying machine 1. During a copying operation in Kayano, if an operator uses a particular copying machine to request target copying tasks to be assigned to multiple machines, the particular copying machine becomes the sender of target image data. However, Kayano never fluidly selects an alternate printing apparatus from “a preset range of printing apparatuses”. In that way Kayano does not disclose the above-discussed feature in claim 1, and as similarly recited in the other independent claims.

Independent claim 1 also recites:

a job transfer unit that itself automatically *transfers the at least one print job* stored in the buffer provided in the source printing apparatus specified by said source apparatus specification unit to the buffer of another printing apparatus in the preset range of printing apparatuses (emphasis added).

The other independent claims recite a similar feature.

According to the above claimed feature, the claimed printing system *transfers a print job* from one printing apparatus to another printing apparatus. Thereby, the print job that is transferred does not remain in the sending device. Kayano, in contrast to the claimed features, only sends image data from the copying machine 1 to the copying machines 2 and 3. The print job itself, however, *remains* in the copying machine 1 in Kayano. This is apparent from the discussion in Kayano at column 8, line 63 to column 9, line 14. Kayano discloses the copying machine 1 being incapable of carrying out “recovery copying” unless it has

image data stored therein, “if recovery copying processing is conducted by itself”. Thus, in Kayano a print job is not transferred from one printing apparatus to another printing apparatus.

In such ways, independent claim 1 further distinguishes over Kayano. The other independent claims recite similar features and also distinguish over Kayano for similar reasons.

Further, applicants respectfully submit the dependent claims were not properly considered in the Office Action.

As an example dependent claim 2 recites the source apparatus specification unit also including “the first information acquisition unit...” and “a unit that detects a printing apparatus having a long queue of the print jobs...”. With respect to the claimed “unit” the outstanding Office Action cites Shimakawa at column 6, lines 3-15. However, applicants respectfully submit Shimakawa does not cure the deficiencies in Kayano.

Shimakawa provides a client 200a with information about environmental conditions (for instance no problem is arising) of printers 105 and 106, and the job stores conditions in spools 225 and 243 included in the printers 105 and 106 under circumstances that a target printing job is interrupted due to a malfunction of the printer during operation, or that the printing job is not yet executed completely. In Shimakawa an operator then confirms the situation on a monitor and issues a continued print command.<sup>3</sup>

If the teachings in Shimakawa were applied to the teachings in Kayano, at most in the resulting device when an operator presses a connection mode selection button 55 of copying machine 1 in Kayano, the operator would be able to see if any problem arises in the copying machine 1 or if the copying machine 1 has any job to be completed on the monitor, and the operator could then input a continued print command into the copying machine 1 (as such are

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<sup>3</sup> See for example the discussion in Shimakawa, at column 5, line 63 to column 6, line 32.

the teachings in Shimakawa). Such a combination of teachings does not meet the claim limitation of “a unit that detects a printing apparatus having a long queue of the print jobs based on the first information obtained by said first information acquisition unit, and specifies the detected printing apparatus as the source printing apparatus”.

Kayano further discloses a configuration in which if a jamming occurs during the allotted copying operation in copying machine 3, the copying machine 2 can replace the copying machine 1 for finishing the copying. Even if the configuration of Shimakawa as discussed above was applied to the copying machine 2 in Kayano, the resulting device still would not meet the limitations of claim 2. Specifically, Kayano provides no disclosure of newly transferring image data to copying machines 1 and 2 from the copying machine 3. In Kayano the image data is only transferred from the copying machine 1 to the copying machines 2 and 3 at the beginning of the allotted copying operation. Image data is not re-transmitted when jamming occurs during the allotted copying operation in copying machine 3.

In such further ways no combination of teachings of Kayano and Shimakawa fully meets the limitations of dependent claim 2, and the claims dependent therefrom.

With respect specifically to dependent claim 4, as discussed above Kayano provides no disclosure of transferring image data to copying machines 1 and 2 from the copying machine 3 if jamming occurs during the allotted copying operation in copying machine 3. Thus, dependent claim 4 further distinguishes over the combination of the teachings of Kayano and Shimakawa.

For similar as discussed above other of the dependent claims also further distinguish Kayano in view of Shimakawa.

With respect to new dependent claim 37, the prior art further fails to disclose or suggest “the first information acquisition unit continuously obtains first information”. With

such a claimed configuration constant monitoring of the situation of a printing apparatus becomes possible, and thereby an automatic response becomes possible. Kayano and Shimakawa fail to teach or suggest such a further feature. Thus, new dependent claim 37 further distinguishes over the applied art.

In view of these foregoing comments, applicants respectfully submit the claims as currently written distinguish over the applied art.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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